

Neighborhoods

Seniors enjoy convenience of Duxborough Village

Senior housing center is close to shopping areas

One in a weekly series of stories exploring neighborhoods south of Boston.

By John Chaffee
The Patriot Ledger

Despite its location between the Standish Cemetery and Hall's Corner shopping center, Duxborough Village is not very well known, even to Duxbury residents.

But it provides comfortable housing to 59 people, most of them elderly with annual incomes of less than \$29,000.

Located at the end of a cul-de-sac off Chestnut Street, the village consists of eight buildings, seven with housing units and one an office-meeting room.



It's the town's senior housing center, a state-aided means of providing shelter to older people with limited incomes.

Most Massachusetts cities and towns provide something comparable. Cohasset, for example, has 64 senior housing units. Marshfield has 97, Plymouth 191 and Quincy 470. They constitute a significant but often overlooked part of the

housing market.

Duxborough Village residents cite location as a major benefit.

"Not only can we walk to Hall's Corner, but it's only a five-minute ride to the beach for water-lovers," said Pearl Kiely, 76, who moved to the village two years ago from Dedham.

"It's only a 10-minute drive to the mall in Kingston and 10 minutes to shopping in Marshfield," Kiely added.

Kiely and her husband, Jim, 79, live in a typical unit: a living room with kitchenette, bedroom and bathroom.

According to Don Ducharme, executive director of the Duxbury Housing Authority, tenants pay 30 percent of net monthly income as rent. Rents currently range from below \$100 monthly to more than \$500, Ducharme said.

All utilities except telephone and cable television are included in the rent, Ducharme said.

Duxbury native Wilma Simmons, 82, has lived in Duxborough Village since it opened 21 years ago.

Before moving in, she had been "rooming down in the Millbrook area," Simmons said.

"I'm very happy, very satisfied here," she said.

One resident, Clayton Dearborn, 87, was a driving force behind construction of the village, Ducharme said.

Dearborn, who was chairman of the housing authority at the time, said the village was built because the town's 400 senior citizens proved to other residents there was a need.

"This was all undeveloped land," Dearborn said, "and we built it for just under \$1 million."

He estimated the current value of the eight-building complex at nearly \$20 million.

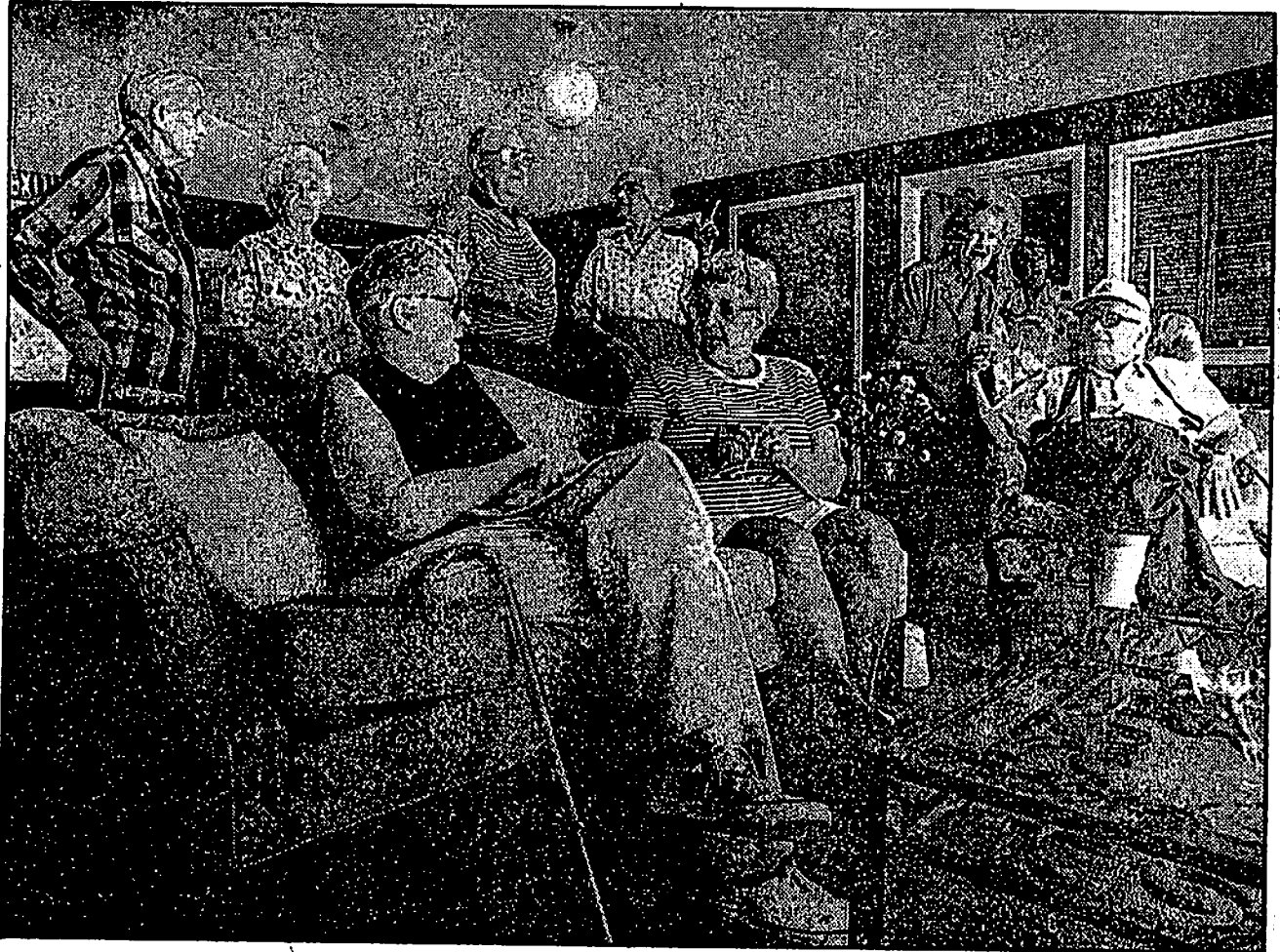
A current member of the housing authority, Phyllis Gorman, 74, moved into the village five years ago from Plymouth.

The state provides financial assistance for other kinds of housing Ducharme administers. But Duxborough Village is self-supporting.

"Last year we collected \$157,000 in rents and had \$139,000 in operating expenses," Ducharme said.

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Fred Field/The Patriot Ledger

Duxborough Village residents enjoy a community room at the center.

The balance will be used to replace a roof on one building and buy a new furnace for another, he said.

Ducharme said Duxborough Village is plagued by a problem common to elderly housing complexes in other communities: lack of adequate parking.

"We hope to get a National Guard engineering unit to come in as a training exercise and clear some space for additional parking," he said.

The question of diversity among the residents is also being discussed.

New state guidelines call for 13.5 percent of village residents to be under 60 and disabled, Ducharme said, a requirement the village hasn't quite met and which elderly residents oppose.

"It's very much against senior wishes," said Pearl Kiely, current president of a residents' organization.

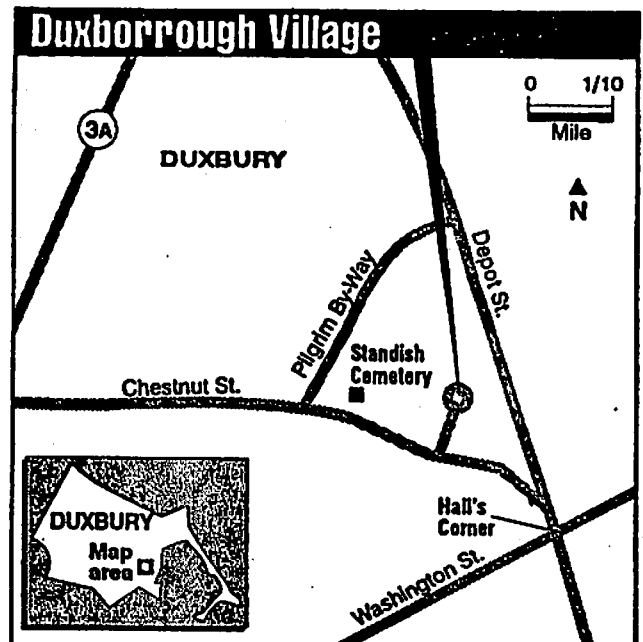
"I don't think those underage people can get along too well with seniors," Kiely said.

But Bruce Barber, 51, disagreed.

Barber, who has major heart problems, moved into the village last February.

"It's been a learning experience for me to become sensitive to the needs of the elderly," he said. "And I think in my heart a little younger blood might be good for the village."

Ducharme said anyone who meets minimum age and income limits can apply for a housing unit at the village, but Duxbury residents get preference.



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